



American Association of University Women

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STATEMENT PRESENTED BEFORE
THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMPENSATION
AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
U.S. House of Representatives

ON

H.R. 4599, the Federal Employees Pay Equity
Act of 1984

AND

H.R. 5092, the Pay Equity Act of 1984

BY

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I am Quincalee Brown, Executive Director of the American Association of University Women, the oldest and largest national organization for the educational advancement of women. We have over 195,000 members residing in every Congressional district in the United States. We applaud Ms. Oakar and members of this subcommittee for their concern about this vital issue of economic equity.

Pay discrimination is against the law, and yet in 1984 women continue to remain the victims of this most obvious form of discrimination. When the AAUW was founded in 1881 its leaders believed that by giving women access to an equal education women would be able to gain equal footing in the marketplace with their male counterparts. It is tragic to note that in spite of all our progress in getting women in colleges and graduate schools, that women on the average earn only 62 cents for every dollar a man earns. Even more discouraging is that despite present laws, some of which have been law over twenty years, such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Executive Order 11246, discriminatory wage setting is still common practice in both the public and private sector. Even more insidious is that although there have been dramatic changes for women's rights in the last 15 years, women are still clustered in just a handful of kinds of jobs. Some 49 percent of all employed females are working in just two categories -- clerical work and commercial cleaning.

Pay inequities are compounded by the problem that even when women work in "traditional" areas of female employment their pay does not reflect comparable worth to male employees doing jobs with roughly the same skills, education and working conditions. Thus, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor

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Statistics figures, the average annual salary of a secretary (an occupation that is 99 percent female) is \$12,000, whereas the average annual salary for a truck driver (a job that is 98 percent male) is \$16,300. "Household workers" a category 95 percent female -- shows an annual average of \$5600 while "janitors" (85 percent male) earn \$11,400. Even in the academic world, where men and women have equivalent educations, the earnings gap crops up in a comparison of faculty salaries, in part because of lack of seniority, and because of the relatively few numbers of women in the hard sciences. Women faculty only earn, on the average, 79 cents for every dollar a man earns. Correcting such inequities has been even less successful on college campuses because of the nature of the tenure system, and the overt barriers that exist to hiring and promoting women faculty.* (Source: The Chronicle of Higher Education, January 18, 1984). The earning gap between men and women will only be narrowed if efforts are made to develop wage scales which apply the theory of comparable worth to the jobs of every member of the work force. (see attached chart)

Several pieces of legislation concerning pay equity and comparable worth have been introduced in this Congress. The intent of many of these bills is to reaffirm a commitment to the concepts, and pressure the Federal government to enforce already existing laws. The AAUW supports the Pay Equity Act of 1984 which encourages pay equity in the private sector and reinforces the Federal government's responsibility to protect employees in this nation from illegal pay discrimination. AAUW also supports the Federal Employees' Pay Equity Act of 1984. In particular AAUW endorses the study,

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outlined in Section 4 of the Act, which mandates the federal Office of Personnel Management to conduct a study on discriminatory wage practices and variances in position classification. We also applaud the efforts contained in this legislation to submit a detailed report to Congress on steps being taken in the federal government to eliminate pay discrimination.

We are also pleased that the Pay Equity Act of 1984 outlines specific activities of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to develop ongoing educational programs which would eliminate discriminatory wage setting practices, and would conduct research on various equitable wage setting techniques, and develop a plan to provide technical assistance to any employer requesting assistance in this area.

The enforcement provisions of the Pay Equity Act are essential if women are to gain economic equality in American society. Laws which are not enforced, and executive orders that go unnoticed can only perpetuate injustice toward 43 percent of the U.S. work force. If it takes legislation to promote enforcement then the AAUW fully lends its support to the vigorous and timely application of this act.

Women workers perform many of the most important jobs in our economy. They are teachers of the nation's children; they are primary providers of health care in hospitals and nursing homes; they are the backbone of the financial and business office world. It is time for Congress to recognize that the contribution women make to the economy requires non-discriminatory pay scales that eliminate sex-segregation in the work force on account of stereotypes of women. Women work for economic needs, not for the luxury of the job. Ending discrimination in the pay scales of American women workers

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marks a first step to full recognition that women are truly equal partners in the economic security of our nation.

Thank You.